

Although only a few exemplary embodiments of this invention have been described in detail above, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that many modifications are possible in the exemplary embodiments without materially departing from the novel teachings and advantages of this invention. Accordingly, all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this invention as defined in the following claims. It is Applicants' intention that means plus function claims are intended to cover the structures described herein as performing the recited function and not only structural equivalents but also equivalent structures as permitted by law. Thus although a nail and a screw may not be structural equivalents in that a nail employs a cylindrical surface to secure wooden parts together, whereas a screw employs a helical surface, in the environment of fastening wooden parts, a nail and a screw may be equivalent structures.

*Please replace the paragraph on page 17, beginning with the words "The present invention relates to ..." with the following paragraph:*

An absorbent article that includes a topsheet, a backsheet, a valving means, and a connection means which permits the connection of a pumping means is described. The valving means allows air to be distributed into one or more regions of the article, for example, between a wearer's skin and the article.

*Please amend Claims 2, 6, 18, 19, 28, 30 and 31 as follow:*

2. The absorbent article of Claim 1, wherein the valving means allows air to be discharged into the article in a region between a wearer's skin and the article.

6. The absorbent article of Claim 1 further comprising a pumping means wherein the pumping means comprises a manual or mechanically assisted means for passing air through the connection means of the absorbent article.

18. The absorbent article of Claim 6, wherein the pumping means is an external pumping means that is self-contained.

19. The absorbent article of Claim 6, wherein the pumping means is an external pumping means that is attached to the article.